

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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DEPT. PLEASE PASS ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, SELA, XM

SUBJECT: STATUS OF SELA

REF: CARACAS 11759

1. SUMMARY. DURING COURTESY CALL OCTOBER 5 SELA PERMANENT SECRETARY MONCAYO RAISED QUESTION OF US OFFER OF COOPERATION. DESPITE MONCAYO'S ASSURANCE THAT SELA IS OFF AND RUNNING, WE HAVE IMPRESSION PROGRESS IS SLOW AND IT IS PREMATURE TO EXPECT ORGANIZATION TO TAKE ANY INITIATIVE IN RESPONSE TO US OFFER. END SUMMARY.

2. ON OCTOBER 5 EMBASSY OFFICERS PAID COURTEST CALL ON DR. JAIME MONCAYO, PERMANENT SECRETARY OF SELA. WHEN ASKED CURRENT STATUS OF SELA, MONCAYO REFERRED TO OFFER MADE BY SECRETARY KISSINGER LAST FEBRUARY TO COOPERATE WITH SELA AND REQUESTED A REVIEW OF US POLICY TOWARDS THE ORGANIZATION SINCE THAT DATE. EMBOFF SAID SECRETARY KISSINGER'S OFFER OF COOPERATION, SPECIFICALLY IN TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY, STILL STANDS. THE US IS SYMPATHETIC WITH MANY OF SELA'S OBJECTIVES-PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO ECONOMIC INTEGRATION-AND IS PREPARED TO COOPERATE IN ANY FEASIBLE WAY.

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3. MONCAYO LAUNCHED INTO A LONG MONOLOGUE REGARDING

SELA'S OBJECTIVES AND PROGRESS ACHIEVED. HE SAID THAT SELA IS DOING VERY WELL, POINTING OUT THAT 18 OF THE 25 MEMBER NATIONS HAVE ALREADY RATIFIED ITS CHARTER AND THAT THREE MORE (COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA AND HAITI) ARE LIKELY TO DO SO BEFORE JANUARY 1. PROGRESS TOWARDS RATIFICATION IN THE SOUTHERN CONE IS MOVING MORE SLOWLY. CHILE, ARGENTINA, URUGUAY AND PARAGUAY HAVE NOT YET TAKEN THE INITIAL STEPS TO RATIFY SELA'S CHARTER. NEVERTHELESS, MONCAYO REGARDED THE ABOVE RECORD AS OUTSTANDING, POINTING OUT THAT COMPARABLE ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS LAFTA, THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COMMON MARKET AND THE ANDEAN GROUP HAD TAKEN MUCH LONGER TO ORGANIZE THEMSELVES.

4. MONCAYO REGARDS SELA AS DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT FROM OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. IT IS ACTION-ORIENTED RATHER THAN ORGANIZED FOR CONDUCTING STUDIES OR SPONSORING DEBATES. SELA WILL RECOMMEND TO ITS MEMBERS PROJECTS AND SUBJECTS OF CONCERN TO ALL OR MOST OF ITS MEMBERS. IT WILL NOT BE DOMINATED BY ONE OR TWO LARGE COUNTRIES, BUT WILL SERVE THE INTERESTS OF ALL. THE SELA SECRETARIAT IS SMALL AND THE ORGANIZATION WILL AVOID ANY TEMPTATION TO INFLATE ITS IMAGE THROUGH PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS.

5. MONCAYO SAID THAT SELA ACTION COMMITTEES HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED AND HAVE MADE GOOD PROGRESS. FOR EXAMPLE, HE CITED THE COMMITTEE ON FOOD AND NUTRITION WHICH MET RECENTLY IN CARACAS UNDER VENEZUELAN SPONSORSHIP. SELA HAS ESTABLISHED FIRM CONTACTS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH ITS OBJECTIVES (UNCTAD, CIEC, ECLA, ETC.) AND HAS BEEN ASSURED OF THEIR COOPERATION.

6. WHEN EMBOFF ASKED MONCAYO HOW US MIGHT COOPERATE WITH SELA, HE REPLIED THAT HE COULD NOT SUGGEST ANY SPECIFIC ACTION AT THIS TIME BUT THAT SELA AS A NEW, AND MORE IMPORTANT, INNOVATIVE ORGANIZATION WAS NOT INTERESTED IN A TRADITIONAL BUREAUCRATIC RELATIONSHIP. HE THEN STRESSED THAT IT IS UP TO THE US TO COME FORTH WITH A SPECIFIC OFFER OF COOPERATION TO FLESH OUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SECRETARY KISSINGER'S GENERAL STATEMENT OF SUPPORT. HE ASKED SEVERAL TIMES WHETHER EMBOFFS HAD ANYTHING TO OFFER OR INSTRUCTIONS FROM WASHINGTON WHICH WENT BEYOND THE SECRETARY'S STATEMENT. WITHOUT SOME KIND OF FURTHER COMMITMENT, WHICH MONCAYO DECLINED TO DEFINE WITH ANY CLARITY, HE FORESAW LITTLE THE USG COULD DO FOR THE ORGANIZATION. IN THIS REGARD, HE ALSO AVOIDED RESPONDING TO A QUESTION BY AN EMBOFF ABOUT THE EXACT

NATURE OF THE CANADIAN OFFER OF ASSISTANCE, REPORTED IN CARACAS 8105. WHEN DISCUSSING THE NEED FOR A USG COMMITMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE ORGANIZATION, HE FIRST MENTIONED THE NEED FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, BUT WHEN EMBOFFS POINTED OUT THAT FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS ON THE PART OF THE USG USUALLY INVOLVE CONGRESSIONAL FUNDING, HE QUICKLY BACKTRACKED AND SUGGESTED THAT WHATEVER COOPERATION MAY BE OFFERED SHOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH SELA'S COMMITMENT TO THE NIEO. HE HAD EXPERIENCE, HE SAID, WITH THE EFFECT OF THE US CONGRESS ON INITIATIVES BY THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. HE HOPED ANY USG COMMITMENT TO SELA WOULD BE INDEPENDENT OF THE CONGRESS. HE ALSO SAID HE DOUBTED USG WOULD BE ABLE TO DO MUCH FOR SELA UNTIL AFTER US ELECTIONS. FINALLY, HE SAID THAT ANY US OFFER WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE FULL SELA COUNCIL AND THAT HE IS IN HIS OWN CAPACITY WOULD, OF COURSE, NOT BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH US WITHOUT THE SANCTION OF THE COUNCIL MEMBERS.

7. COMMENT. MONCAYO WAS FRIENDLY AND OPEN WITH EMBOFFS, BUT SOMEWHAT DEFENSIVE, PARTICULARLY IN DISCUSSING POTENTIAL USG SUPPORT FOR SELA. HE CLEARLY SOUGHT TO GIVE US THE IMPRESSION THAT SELA IS OFF AND RUNNING, EVEN IF ITS ACTION COMMITTEE PROGRAM IS STILL IN THE FORMATIVE STAGE. WE SUSPECT THAT MONCAYO'S AMBIVALENT ATTITUDE TOWARD A USG ROLE FOR SELA IS BASED BOTH ON CONCERN THAT SELA MIGHT LOSE SOME OF ITS LUSTER BY CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH US, AND GENUINE DOUBTS ABOUT THE LEVEL AND KIND OF COMMITMENT THE USG MIGHT BE ABLE TO MAKE. FURTHER, WE DOUBT THAT SELA IS YET PREPARED TO DISCUSS IN CONCRETE TERMS AREAS OF SPECIFIC COOPERATION. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT SELA IS MAKING SLOW PROGRESS GETTING ITS PROGRAM STARTED. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE THINK IT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PREMATURE TO EXPECT THE ORGANIZATION TO TAKE ANY INITIATIVE IN RESPONSE TO SECRETARY KISSINGER'S OFFER, AT LEAST UNTIL SPECIFIC PROGRAMS ARE CLOSER TO IMPLEMENTATION.
VAKY

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